

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Why Denominational Baptism Is Wrong

By Steven J. Wallace

Undoubtedly, there are people who teach that a person can join any church that he wishes. The attitude is similar to that of buying shoes. We can try on many different styles and whatever feels the best, run with it. Another popular expression is, “Many roads lead to the same place.” Some problems with these expressions are that we are not buying shoes and the only time and place when all denominations will run together is on Judgment Day. Well, one may ask, “What is wrong with denominational baptism?”

DENOMINATIONAL BAPTISM – A DIFFERENT FAITH

Paul stated that there is, *“one Lord, one faith, one baptism”* (Eph. 4:5). This *“one baptism”* is a result from preaching the *“one faith,”* which is given by *“one Lord”* – Jesus Christ. If two people believe in one Lord, but have different faiths (gospel or body of truth; Gal. 1:23; 1 Cor. 15:1, 2), how can they both be partakers of the same (one) Lord and baptism (Gal. 3:26-27)? How can both have remission of sins when both differ in faith and practice? Denominationalism perverts the gospel by teaching contradictory baptisms which are foreign to Jesus’ lordship. Can we be partakers of the Lord’s goodness if we stray from the primitive first-century message? Inspiration plainly teaches that we cannot, *“...if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed”* (Gal. 1:9). The Bible is clear that if someone believes a different gospel than what was preached by the apostles, he is turning away from Christ (Gal. 1:6). Since baptism is gospel, those who turn away from baptism into Christ (for the remission of sins) do not have Christ (cf. Rom. 6:1-18; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

DENOMINATIONAL BAPTISM – A DIFFERENT ELEMENT

Many denominations are not satisfied with the element in the *“one baptism.”* They try to combine water baptism with Holy Spirit baptism or make it into some metaphorical baptism. People usually turn to such “interpretive tactics” when they do not like what they read. Some teach that a person is supposed to speak in tongues after he is baptized. These apostate bodies are backwards in their combination. First of all, in the two accounts of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 2:1-4; 10:44-48), water baptism distinctly followed Holy Spirit baptism. Consequently, the scriptures teach that Holy Spirit baptism was for the purpose of revealing God’s plan (Acts 11:18). It was not something to be obeyed nor can it be administered by man; it was administered by Jesus alone (see Matt. 3:11). The *“one baptism”* is water baptism, *“See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?”* (Acts 8:36). Also, *“Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized?”* (Acts 10:47).

We do not present these things motivated with strife, but that our readers will be educated in what the Bible says regarding such a subject. We obviously print material such as this as we perceive it to be of utmost importance to the readers understanding.

Since the Bible teaches that baptism is for the saving of the soul, what could be more important than printing truth that pertains to man’s immortal and priceless soul? This information is therefore submitted in humility and prayer that it may be a tool to lead those who are looking into the law of liberty.

PLEASE ALSO CONSIDER:

THE MODE OF BAPTISM

In violation of the New Testament practice, several denominations substituted the practice of “sprinkling” or

“pouring” in place of baptism. Yet Paul tells us that baptism is a burial, and that it corresponds to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-9). How does sprinkling compare to Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection? Does one resurrect from being sprinkled? If “sprinkling” is equivalent with **“baptism,”** then we should be able to insert “sprinkling” in the Bible for **“baptism.”** This is how Roman 6:4 would read, “Therefore we were buried with Him through sprinkling [baptism, actual text] into death...” Such a rendering sows nonsense in the context. Such a view would have Philip and the eunuch going down **“into the water”** so that Philip could sprinkle him (Acts 8:38). Why would they both have had to go down into the water for a sprinkling? Philip could have merely grabbed a cup full of water and splashed it in the Ethiopian’s face and called it **“baptism.”** Beware of denominations which substitute human ways for God’s, for they are nothing more than a human substitution for the church. We need to stay in the boundaries of the Bible!

THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

The purpose of water baptism is for the remission of sins, getting into Christ, and getting into His death where reconciliation is (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3; 5:10, 11). In other words, the purpose of baptism is for salvation as our Lord clearly stated, **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”** (Mk. 16:16). Likewise, **“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism...”** (1 Peter 3:21). What does all of this prove? It proves that denominational baptism is contradictory to our Lord when it is administered as something that the saved do to show their grace. Baptism is something that sinners do to be saved! Denominational baptism therefore simply gets people wet, but doesn't connect people to the blood of Christ. Since teaching always precedes Bible baptism, one cannot be taught denominational error and be baptized right! ■

THE “RESTORATION MOVEMENT”

By Hugh Fulford

PERSPECTIVE is always a valuable commodity. It is needed where the restoration movement is concerned. We must be careful to not canonize the restoration leaders or the restoration movement. I think I see some effort to do this, especially where Stone and Campbell are concerned. I read a lot about the Stone-Campbell this, that, and the other. Stone and Campbell were not the only men pleading for a return to the New Testament order of things. They were not the only able men in the movement to restore apostolic undenominational Christianity.

We must be careful to not see “the Stone-Campbell Movement” as the origin of “our church.” It is not “our church” in which we should be interested, but the church of the New Testament. Stone, Campbell, Scott, Smith, et al were not our “founders.” Christ was the founder of the church and it is the church of the New Testament of which I am a member by virtue of my obedience to the gospel (Acts 2:37-47). I believe in the restoration principle. It is a valid and biblical principle. I believe in the restoration plea and the restoration movement, but my membership is in the church of our Lord and that alone.

The restoration movement is not the end, but the means to an end—the true church of the New Testament. Write about “our” history all we care to. Collect all the trivia and artifacts from “our” history that you care to. But be very careful not to build up a denominational view of the church—“our fellowship,” “our tradition,” “our heritage,” “the Stone-Campbell fellowship,” “the Restoration Movement churches,” etc. I am a Christian, not a Campbellite! I am a member of the body of Christ, the church—not a denomination that originated in the early 19th century. ■

“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21, NKJV).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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